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News Releases and other News Material

Number 03394

March 14 - March 18, 1994

IN THIS ISSUE:

	Page
NEWS RELEASES-	
0214 FGIS Seeks Input On Pilot Competitive Inspections	1
0216 Saturated Fat And Cholesterol Blunt Benedicts Of Reducing Fat Intake	1
0220 USDA Reapportings American Egg Board Membership	2
0222 USDA Report: Uruguay Round Will Raise Farm Exports And Income, And Create Jobs	3
0224 Fire Ants Use "Internal Compass" To Navigate In The Dark	4
0225 USDA Seeks Recertification Of Beef Board Nominators	5
0226 USDA Takes Action To Expedite Eradication Of Swine Brucellosis	5
0227 Corn And Grain Sorghum 0/92 Program Participants To Receive \$95 Million In Additional Deficiency Payments for 1993	6
0228 Private And Public Partnership Addresses Environmental Concern	7
0230 USDA Proposes Lower Fees For Classing 1994 Cotton Crop	8
0231 USDA Proposes Allowing Interstate Movement Of Hawaiian Carambola	8
0232 USDA Proposes To Revise Standards For Grades Of Canned Peas	9
0233 USDA Proposes To End Citrus Canker Quarantine In Florida	9
PROGRAM ANNOUNCEMENTS-	
0221 USDA Announces Prevailing World Market Rice Prices, Marketing Certificate Rates	10
0229 USDA Announces Prevailing World Market Price And User Marketing Certificate Payment Rate For Upland Cotton	10
FEATURES-	
0215 Replacing Petroleum with Renewable Crop Oil	11
0218 Multi-State Team to Set "Biodiesel" Standards	12
0223 Milkweed Could Spin Profits For Nebraska Farmers	13

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For further information about this booklet contact Charles Hobbs, editor, News Division, Office of Public Affairs, Room 406-A, U.S Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250 or call (202) 720-4026.

News Releases-

Release No. 0214.94

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FGIS SEEKS INPUT ON PILOT COMPETITIVE INSPECTIONS

WASHINGTON, March 14--The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Federal Grain Inspection Service is seeking suggestions on the design and implementation of pilot programs to allow more than one designated agency to inspect or weigh grain in a single interior geographic area.

According to David Shipman, acting FGIS administrator, the pilot programs were provided for in the 1993 Amendments to the United States Grain Standards Act as a means of gathering data on the effect of allowing more than one official agency to inspect or weigh grain in a single area.

FGIS is considering pilot programs involving barges, commercial inspection services, submitted samples, situations involving agencies granted exceptions to inspect or weigh grain outside their assigned geographic area, and at locations where service cannot be provided within 12 hours.

Comments on the pilot programs and suggestions for their design and implementation must be submitted in writing by April 22 to Neil Porter, FGIS Compliance Division, USDA, FGIS, Room 1647 So. Bldg., P.O. Box 96454, Washington, DC, 20090-6454; FAX (202) 720-1015. Notice of this action is scheduled to be published in the March 14 Federal Register.



Release No. 0216.94

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SATURATED FAT AND CHOLESTEROL BLUNT BENEFITS OF REDUCING FAT INTAKE

WASHINGTON, March 14--Reducing fat intake to 30 percent of calories isn't enough to lower blood cholesterol, according to a 6-month U.S. Department of Agriculture study.

"The study found that the amount of saturated fat and cholesterol in the diet had a strong influence on the volunteers' LDL cholesterol levels, despite a reduction in fat calories," said study leader Alice Lichtenstein of USDA's Human Nutrition Research Center on Aging at Tufts, Boston. LDL cholesterol is the type that damages arteries.

Lichtenstein said reducing fat intake from 35 to 30 percent of total calories made no change in the volunteers' LDL cholesterol "when the fat was mostly saturated and we added extra cholesterol--the equivalent of one and a half egg yolks a day."

With partial support from the National Institutes of Health, Lichtenstein, Ernst J. Schaefer and colleagues at the USDA center tested four variations of a 30-percent-fat diet on 14 men and women with moderately elevated LDL cholesterol. Two-thirds of the fat in the diets was either corn oil or beef tallow, each with and without extra cholesterol.

The researchers compared the volunteers' blood lipid levels on each diet with their baseline levels--after they had consumed a 35-percent fat diet designed to resemble a typical U.S. diet for one week.

"We wanted to clarify inconsistent findings about the actual impact of dietary cholesterol on people's cholesterol levels," said Lichtenstein. "It's a highly controversial issue and may depend on variability among individuals or other nutrients in the diet, particularly the type of fat."

The researchers also wanted to determine the effects of a good source of stearic acid, a saturated fatty acid that reportedly has no effect on blood cholesterol.

Lichtenstein and colleagues concluded: "the current recommendation of limiting saturated fatty acids seems valid and prudent." The data will be useful to expert panels that periodically update the dietary guidelines.

She said the volunteers' LDL cholesterol dropped only half as much from baseline levels--8 versus 17 percent--when the majority of the fat in the reduced-fat diets was beef tallow compared with corn oil.

Also, she noted, "the volunteers were sensitive to extra dietary cholesterol independent of the fat composition." It reduced the drop in blood cholesterol when added to the corn oil diet and prevented a drop when added to the beef tallow diet.

Since beef tallow also contains cholesterol, adding extra cholesterol to this diet pushed its content to twice the recommended limit.

The volunteers did better on the corn oil diet, even with the extra cholesterol, she said. LDL cholesterol dropped 17 percent below baseline levels without the added egg yolk and 12 percent with it. And HDL cholesterol--the beneficial kind--dropped less with the extra cholesterol than it did on the beef tallow diet.

The findings were reported in the January issue of Arteriosclerosis and Thrombosis.

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NOTE TO EDITOR: For details contact Alice H. Lichtenstein, nutritional biochemist, (617) 556-3127, or Ernst J. Schaefer, medical doctor, (617) 556-3100, USDA Human Nutrition Research Center on Aging at Tufts, Boston, Mass. 02111

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Release No. 0220.94
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USDA REAPPORTIONS AMERICAN EGG BOARD MEMBERSHIP

WASHINGTON, March 15 -- The U.S. Department of Agriculture is amending the Egg Research and Promotion Rules and Regulations to redistrict the six geographic areas and reapportion membership on the American Egg Board.

USDA and the American Egg Board recently reviewed egg production data. Lon Hatamiya, administrator of USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service, said the review showed that the West North Central and Western areas were not equitably represented on the board. The Egg Research and Promotion Order provides a formula for determining the number of members allotted each area. Calculations based on that formula and applying current production data would result in a 19-member board. However, this exceeds the order's limit of 18 members, Hatamiya said.

Accordingly, USDA has made the following changes to ensure equal representation for each area--at three members each--beginning with the 1995-96 membership term:

- Area 1 (North Atlantic states: Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont and District of Columbia) -- add Virginia and West Virginia;
- Area 2 (South Atlantic states: Florida, Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia and West Virginia) -- add Alabama, Kentucky and Tennessee; lose Virginia and West Virginia;
- Area 3 (East North Central states: Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio and Wisconsin) -- lose Illinois and Wisconsin;
- Area 4 (West North Central states: Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota and South Dakota) -- add Illinois and Wisconsin; lose Kansas and Missouri;
- Area 5 (South Central states: Alabama, Arkansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Oklahoma, Tennessee and Texas) -- add Colorado, Kansas, Missouri and New Mexico; lose Alabama, Kentucky and Tennessee;
- Area 6 (Western states: Arizona, California, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington and Wyoming) -- lose Colorado and New Mexico.

Area 4 increases from two to three members, while Area 6 decreases from four to three members. Areas 1, 2, 3 and 5 remain at three members each, Hatamiya said.

Details of the amendments are scheduled to be published as a final rule in the March 16 Federal Register. Copies are available from Janice L. Lockard, Chief, Standardization Branch, Poultry Division, AMS, USDA, Room 3944-S, P.O. Box 96456, Washington, D.C. 20090-6456; tel. (202) 720-3506.



Release No. 0222.94
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USDA REPORT: URUGUAY ROUND WILL RAISE FARM EXPORTS AND INCOME, AND CREATE JOBS

WASHINGTON, March 16--According to a U.S. Department of Agriculture report issued today by Secretary Mike Espy, the Uruguay Round agreement in agriculture is projected to result in higher U.S. agricultural exports, more export-related jobs and higher aggregate farm sector income in the year 2000.

In addition, net outlays on U.S. farm programs are projected to decline. Larger gains are expected to occur by the year 2005 as world income grows due to the Uruguay Round.

"This report points clearly to the fact that the Uruguay Round will be very beneficial to American agriculture. It means increased income for producers and increased job opportunities for all Americans," Espy said.

The report, "Effects of the Uruguay Round on U.S. Agricultural Products," provides detailed analysis of specific commodities including, wheat, feed grains, soybeans, cotton, peanuts, sugar, dairy products, beef, pork, poultry, eggs, and numerous horticultural products.

According to the report, estimated benefits from the agreement include:

- The Uruguay Round is projected to increase U.S. agricultural exports by \$1.6 to \$4.7 billion in 2000 and by \$4.7 to \$8.7 billion in 2005. Grains and animal products account for almost 75 percent of the increase.

- Employment generated by exports is expected to increase by as much as 112,000 jobs in 2000, and by as much as 190,000 jobs in 2005.

- The Uruguay Round is expected to raise net farm sector income by as much as \$1.3 billion in 2000 and by as much as \$2.5 billion in 2005. Government outlays in 2000 could decline by almost \$1.3 billion and in 2005 could be as much as \$2.6 billion lower.

The Uruguay Round is the first step in moving world agriculture towards more liberalized markets. It commits GATT members to consider further liberalization. Before 1947 the tariff rate for non-agricultural good exceeded 40 percent. After seven GATT rounds, the average tariff rate for these goods was just 5 percent. The Uruguay Round will reduce these tariffs further to 3.5 percent.

The Uruguay Round will also apply trade discipline to countries who might otherwise choose the direction of closed markets, production-inducing internal supports and subsidized exports. This agreement has important consequences for our large trading partners that are currently outside of the GATT: China, Taiwan, and the nations of the Former Soviet Union.

The study was prepared by USDA's Office of Economics and the Economic Research Service and presents preliminary projections under the agreement compared with USDA's baseline projections which assumed a continuation of pre-Uruguay policies. Projections are presented as a range, reflecting a range of plausible growth rates for global income generated by the Uruguay Round.



FIRE ANTS USE "INTERNAL COMPASS" TO NAVIGATE IN THE DARK

WASHINGTON, March 16--When it's dark, a fire ant foraging for food finds its way back home by using an "internal compass" that senses the earth's magnetic field, U.S. Department of Agriculture and cooperating scientists have discovered.

"We are investigating the relationship between the ant's magnetic sense and its attraction to electrical current, including the potential for attracting fire ants to traps," said Robert K. Vander Meer of USDA's Agricultural Research Service.

Across most of the South and Southeast, he said, the fire ant feeds on a variety of insects and agricultural crops-- "whatever it can find." It multiplies rapidly, occurs in large numbers and stings, making it a serious household and outdoor pest.

Vander Meer said the aggressive ants have been reported to be attracted to electrical fields such as in air conditioning units and telephone switch boxes. They've even been found in traffic light signals. Where there is electrical current, he said, then there is an associated magnetic field.

A compass-like material called magnetite apparently allows the fire ants to sense the normal south-to-north direction of the earth's magnetic field, said Vander Meer. He is a chemist based at the agency's Medical and Veterinary Entomology Research Laboratory in Gainesville, Fla.

"It's the first time this phenomenon has been found in ants," he said. Other researchers have documented this trait in honeybees, mice, termites, salmon, pigeons and bacteria.

Vander Meer said the "homing compass" was found in the fire ant species *Solenopsis invicta* that has spread throughout southern states where it was accidentally imported without its natural enemies. It came into the United States from its native South America aboard cargo ships in the 1930s.

As worker ants forage for food, they can travel up to 100 feet from the home nest that's built in mounds that can be up to several feet deep. Since they are cold blooded, their activities are regulated by temperature. They prefer to search at night during hot summer days to avoid the heat, and forage during the day in winter.

Vander Meer said fire ants will ignore summer heat and scramble out of a nest if people or animals disrupt the home. The ant's sting is painful, and people can become hypersensitive to the ant's venom.

Vander Meer and former University of Florida scientist James B. Anderson made the discovery during a four-year study from 1989-93. Vander Meer said the fire ant may also use its magnetic sense for orientation inside the dark confines of its nest.

The researchers confirmed the ant's magnetic sense during lab tests in which they placed ant colonies in dark rooms on trays in either a normal south-to-north magnetic field or an altered field. The ants were given one hour to acclimate themselves to total darkness. Then, a dead American cockroach was placed about nine inches away as a source of food.

"When the magnetic field was constant, it took about 14 minutes for the fire ant workers to form a trail from the tray to the food," Vander Meer said. "But when we changed the field direction at the same time the food was positioned, it took more than twice as long--about 30 minutes--for them to form a trail."

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NOTE TO EDITORS: Contact for details Robert K. Vander Meer, Medical and Veterinary Entomology Research Laboratory, Agricultural Research Service, USDA, Gainesville, Fla. Telephone: (904) 374-5918.

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Release No. 0225.94
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USDA SEEKS RECERTIFICATION OF BEEF BOARD NOMINATORS

WASHINGTON, March 16 -- The U.S. Department of Agriculture is requiring recertification for all cattle producer and importer organizations certified before Jan. 1, 1994, as eligible to nominate cattle producers or importers to the Cattlemen's Beef Promotion and Research Board.

USDA is also accepting applications from cattle producer and importer organizations that want to be initially certified to nominate producers or importers to the board.

Lon Hatamiya, administrator of USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service, said, "Only those organizations which are recertified or initially certified based on applications received by [30 days after publication in Federal Register], will be eligible to participate in the nomination process this year. To qualify as eligible to nominate members to the board, organizations must provide factual information as specified in the Beef Promotion and Research Act."

The 107-member board was established by the Beef Promotion and Research Act of 1985. The Secretary of Agriculture appoints board members to develop and administer a coordinated program of beef promotion and research and to expand foreign and domestic markets and uses of beef and beef products.

Producer representation on the board is based on the number of cattle in each state. Importer representation is based on the volume of beef and beef products imported. States producing too few cattle to be represented alone are grouped into units for the purpose of allocating board positions.

Individual state and unit vacancies occur this year in Arizona, California, Colorado, Iowa, Kansas, Louisiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Nebraska, Nevada, Mexico, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Wisconsin, Wyoming, Mid-Atlantic and Northeast units, and Importers.

The national program is financed by a mandatory assessment of \$1 per head on cattle sold in the United States and an equivalent amount in imported cattle, beef and beef products.

Organizations previously certified will receive additional information by mail from USDA. Details of the certification procedures were published in today's Federal Register for March 16. For more information contact Ralph L. Tapp, Chief, Marketing Programs Branch, Livestock and Seed Division, AMS, USDA, Room 2624-S, P.O. Box 96456, Washington, D.C. 20090-6456, telephone (202) 720-1115. Recertified and newly certified organizations will receive nomination information upon completion of the certification process.



Release No. 0226.94
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USDA TAKES ACTION TO EXPEDITE ERADICATION OF SWINE BRUCELLOSIS

WASHINGTON, March 16--The U.S. Department of Agriculture announced today that it will provide swine producers with fair market value indemnity payments if they choose to completely destroy swine herds affected with the bacterial disease brucellosis.

Brucellosis is a serious infectious disease of swine caused by the bacterium *Brucella suis*. It is primarily spread among swine from sexual contact of breeding animals or through feed or material contaminated with the urine or genital discharges from infected pigs. Infected sows are likely to abort, to be infertile and to go lame in the rear legs.

The USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service works with state animal health officials through the National Cooperative Swine Brucellosis Eradication Program to eliminate this disease from swine. This program has significantly reduced the prevalence of brucellosis from 15 percent to 0.014 percent of all domestic swine herds. Currently, only 34 herds of the 235,840 total swine herds in the United States are known to be affected with this disease.

"The eradication of swine brucellosis can be accomplished more quickly and less expensively by beginning now to pay fair market value indemnity for destruction of affected swine herds," said Donald Luchsinger, acting deputy administrator of APHIS's veterinary services program.

Offering fair market value gives swine owners financial incentive to destroy herds infected or exposed to brucellosis. Before this action, the amount of indemnity payment to owners for herd destruction was based solely on a maximum rate of \$150 for each registered, inbred, or hybrid breeding swine and \$65 for all other individual breeding swine. Indemnity will now be available for all swine, including "feeder" and "finishing" pigs. While cost to the federal government will initially increase due to use of the fair market value rate, the quick destruction of infected herds will in the long run boost the program's overall effectiveness and reduce its long-term costs to taxpayers.

Brucellosis can be transmitted to slaughter plant employees from infected swine carcasses through contact with breaks in the skin, inhalation or conjunctival contact. Human brucellosis is often called undulant fever. Symptoms of undulant fever include fever, headache, fatigue and weight loss and can reoccur over several weeks if left untreated.

Because immediate action is necessary to eliminate this disease of swine and any potential public health threat, this interim rule is effective upon its scheduled publication in the March 17 Federal Register. APHIS will consider written comments submitted on or before May 16. Please send an original and three copies of written comments referring to docket number 94-007-1 to: Chief, Regulatory Analysis and Development, PPD, APHIS, USDA, Room 804 Federal Building, 6505 Belcrest Road, Hyattsville, Md. 20782. All comments once received can be reviewed at USDA, Room 1154 South Building, 14th Street and Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C., between 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, except holidays. Persons wishing to inspect comments are requested to call ahead on (202) 690-2817 to facilitate entry to the comment reading room.



Release No. 0227.94
Bruce Merkle (202) 720-8206

CORN AND GRAIN SORGHUM 0/92 PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS TO RECEIVE \$95 MILLION IN ADDITIONAL DEFICIENCY PAYMENTS FOR 1993

WASHINGTON, March 17--Corn and grain sorghum producers who used the 0/92 provisions of the 1993 commodity acreage reduction program (ARP) will receive approximately \$95 million in additional deficiency payments, according to Grant Buntrock, executive vice president of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Commodity Credit Corporation.

Participants in the 1993 corn and grain sorghum program who used the 0/92 provisions are guaranteed a minimum payment rate of 72 cents per bushel for corn and 70 cents per bushel for grain sorghum, which were the estimated final deficiency payment rates for these crops for 1993.

Producers enrolled in the regular acreage reduction program were able to request an advance payment equal to fifty percent of the estimated final deficiency payment. Since the advance deficiency payment rate of 36 cents per bushel for corn and 35 cents per bushel for grain sorghum exceeds the 5-month rate for final regular deficiency payments by 8 cents per bushel for corn and 10 cents per bushel for grain sorghum, these producers are not due any additional payments.

"A reduced corn crop due to flooding in the Midwest and drought in the Southeast has resulted in higher market prices," Buntrock said. "Therefore, the final deficiency payment rates are lower than earlier projections."

The Agricultural Act of 1949, as amended, requires ARP participants who did not participate under the 0/92 provisions to repay the difference between the amount of the advance deficiency payment received and the amount of the final deficiency payable, which is 8 cents per bushel for corn and 10 cents per bushel for grain sorghum. This repayment is not due until October 1, 1994, and USDA has announced an option for installment payments.

Buntrock said Secretary Espy has instructed USDA's Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service to take all possible steps to make producers aware of their options in making repayment.

"ASCS county offices and ASC county committees will work with producers," Buntrock said. "Refunds may be made before the due date, in full or in part. Producers may also choose to have overpayments deducted from proceeds due them from any other program, including price support benefits. To help ease the burden of repayment for those producers with financial hardships, there is also the option to pay on an installment basis."

Regular deficiency payments are made under the 1993 corn and grain sorghum programs when the national weighted average market prices received by producers during the first five months of the marketing year (September 1993 through January 1994) are below established target price levels. Deficiency payment rates are calculated as the difference between the target price for the commodity and the higher of the five-month average market price or the basic price support rate.

A further calculation is required after the end of the marketing year before a final determination is made as to the amount of overpayment. The necessary price data for making the calculation will be available on September 30. However, based on current supply/demand estimates and price projections, the final deficiency payment rate is not expected to change.

**Calculation of 5-Month Deficiency Payment Rates
(\$ per bushel)**

	Corn	Sorghum
A. Target Price	2.75	2.61
B. Basic Loan Rate	1.99	1.89
C. 5-Month Market Price	2.47	2.36
D. 5-Month Deficiency Payment Rate (A-C)	0.28	0.25
E. Advance Deficiency Payment Rate	0.36	0.35
F. Net 5-Month Deficiency Payment Rate (D-E)	0.00	0.00
G. Overpayment Rate That Must Be Repaid (E-D)	0.08	0.10



Release No. 0228.94
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PRIVATE AND PUBLIC PARTNERSHIP ADDRESSES ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERN

WASHINGTON, March 17--Federal officials and private industry today entered a joint research project designed to assess and reduce the drifting of agricultural chemicals outside the target area.

"USDA scientists will evaluate new methods to measure and limit movement of chemicals away from the target pest," said USDA Deputy Secretary Richard Rominger. "This project is designed to coordinate efforts between the federal government and industry."

A Cooperative Research and Development Agreement (CRADA) signed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the Environmental Protection Agency and the Spray Drift Task Force--a consortium of 32 industries--marks the first step toward developing systems to minimize the risk of off-site drift.

Rominger was joined at today's signing ceremony by Gary J. Foley, acting assistant administrator for research and development at EPA, Donald R. Flint of Miles Inc. and Richard H. Stanton of Valent USA, representing the industry consortium. The ceremony was held in conjunction with today's National Agricultural Day, sponsored by the Agricultural Council of America.

USDA's Agricultural Research Service and EPA's Office of Research and Development will review field trial results provided by the 32-member industry task force. In addition, EPA will conduct independent studies on development of a modeling system to address chemical drift risk.

As part of the agreement, ARS laboratories in College Station, Texas; Wooster, Ohio, and Stoneville, Miss., will conduct studies designed to:

- Develop new and efficient aerial application systems
- Develop new aerial and ground application equipment
- Develop new spraying techniques for orchards, horticultural and landscape crops.

"Drift of airborne pesticides is a source of environmental concern," said Essex Finney, acting administrator for ARS. "This partnership coordinates research programs in the federal government and industry to avoid duplication of effort."

Field tests will be conducted at approximately 20 sites throughout the nation to gather comprehensive information on agricultural chemical drift patterns. Variables such as atmospheric conditions and manner of application will be used in development of a computer model to determine off-site drift risk.

Using information confirmed through field testing by industry and the federal agencies, the computer program will mathematically estimate the magnitude of drift under a variety of scenarios.

"New information developed under the CRADA has the potential to reduce environmental effects and minimize exposure to agricultural workers," Finney added.

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NOTE TO EDITORS: For details, contact Richard M. Parry, Deputy Assistant Administrator, USDA, ARS, Beltsville, Md. 20705. Telephone (301) 504- 5734.

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Release No. 0230.94
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USDA PROPOSES LOWER FEES FOR CLASSING 1994 COTTON CROP

WASHINGTON, March 17 -- The U.S. Department of Agriculture is proposing to lower the fee for cotton classing services charged to cotton growers. The proposal would reduce the current \$1.87 per bale to \$1.80 per bale, effective July 1.

Lon Hatamiya, administrator of USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service, said the reduced fee for the 1994 harvest season is largely due to increased efficiency achieved by AMS's Cotton Division.

The proposed cotton classing fees are set by a formula stipulated in the Uniform Cotton Classing Fees Act of 1987. The three elements of the formula are: estimated volume of classing by USDA, the rate of inflation and the operating reserve fund of the AMS Cotton Division.

Fees for other cotton classification services offered by AMS's Cotton Division would remain unchanged.

The proposed fees are scheduled to be published in the March 18 Federal Register. Comments postmarked no later than April 18 should be sent to Lee Cliburn, Cotton Division, AMS, USDA, Rm. 2641-S., P.O. Box 96456, Washington, DC 20090-6456; tel (202) 720-3193.

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Release No. 0231.94
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USDA PROPOSES ALLOWING INTERSTATE MOVEMENT OF HAWAIIAN CARAMBOLA

WASHINGTON, March 18--The U.S. Department of Agriculture is proposing to allow Carambola from Hawaii to move interstate under certain conditions.

"The fruit would be required to undergo our prescribed treatment for fruit flies," said B. Glen Lee, deputy administrator of plant protection and quarantine with USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.

Interstate movement is defined by APHIS as the movement of a commodity into or through the continental United States, Guam, the Northern Mariana Islands, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, or any other territory or possession of the United States.

USDA is proposing this action at the request of various shippers and after conducting a pest risk analysis. The analysis indicated that carambola could be moved interstate without significant pest risk if the fruit was treated for fruit flies.

"The carambola must undergo a cold treatment in accordance with our regulations," Lee said. "The cold treatment will destroy any fruit flies in the fruit."

Notice of the proposal is scheduled for publication in the March 21 Federal Register. Comments will be accepted if they are received on or before May 20. An original and three copies of written comments referring to docket number 93-118-1 should be sent to Chief, Regulatory Analysis and Development, PPD, APHIS, USDA, Room 804 Federal Building, 6505 Belcrest Road, Hyattsville, Md. 20782.

Comments may be reviewed at USDA, Room 1141-South Building, 14th Street and Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C., between 8:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, except holidays.



Release No. 0232.94
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USDA PROPOSES TO REVISE STANDARDS FOR GRADES OF CANNED PEAS

WASHINGTON, March 18 -- The U.S. Department of Agriculture is proposing to revise the United States standards for grades of canned peas.

Lon Hatamiya, administrator of USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service, said the proposed revisions would:

- provide for the "individual attributes" procedure for product grading with sample sizes, acceptable quality levels, tolerance and acceptance numbers;
- replace dual grade nomenclature with single letter grade designations;
- base the tolerance for extraneous vegetable material on drained weight rather than product weight and weight of the brine;
- bring tolerance for defects in canned peas in line with the tolerance for defects in frozen peas; and
- remove the score sheet for canned peas from the standards and make minor editorial changes to provide users with simpler and more comprehensive standards.

The proposed revisions are scheduled to be published in the March 21 Federal Register. Comments in duplicate must be received by May 20 in the Office of the Branch Chief, Processed Products Branch, Fruit and Vegetable Division, AMS, USDA, Rm. 0709-S, P.O. Box 96456, Washington, D.C. 20090-6456.

For more information contact James R. Rodeheaver at the above address, telephone (202) 720-4693.



Release No. 0233.94
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USDA PROPOSES TO END CITRUS CANCER QUARANTINE IN FLORIDA

WASHINGTON, March 18--The U.S. Department of Agriculture is proposing to remove the citrus canker quarantine in Highlands, Manatee and Hillsborough counties in Florida, leaving the state free of federal quarantines for this citrus disease.

"No evidence of citrus canker has been found in these areas for at least two years," said B. Glen Lee, deputy administrator for plant protection and quarantine in USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service. "Therefore, we are proposing to remove regulatory restrictions on the movement of citrus plants, plant parts and fresh fruit."

Citrus canker is a plant disease caused by a bacterium. The disease is known to affect citrus plants and plant parts, including fresh fruit. It can cause lesions in the fruit, making it unmarketable. The disease was first detected in Florida in 1984.

Citrus canker is an economically devastating disease, as all infected plants must be destroyed to eradicate this menace.

Notice of this proposed rule was published in the March 17 Federal Register. To comment, send an original and three copies referring to docket number 93-153-1 on or before April 18 to: Chief, Regulatory Analysis and Development, PPD, APHIS, USDA, Room 804 Federal Building, 6505 Belcrest Road, Hyattsville, Md. 20782. Comments received may be reviewed at USDA, Room 1141, South Building, 14th Street and Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C., between 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, except holidays.



Program Announcements-

Release No. 0221.94
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USDA ANNOUNCES PREVAILING WORLD MARKET RICE PRICES, MARKETING CERTIFICATE RATES

WASHINGTON, March 15--Under Secretary of Agriculture Eugene Moos today announced the prevailing world market prices of milled rice, loan rate basis, as follows:

--long grain whole kernels:	12.20 cents per pound
--medium grain whole kernels:	11.52 cents per pound
--short grain whole kernels:	11.38 cents per pound
--broken kernels:	6.10 cents per pound

Based upon these milled rice world market prices, loan deficiency payment rates, gains from repaying price support loans at the world market price, and marketing certificate rates are zero.

The prices announced are effective today at 3 p.m. EST. The next scheduled price announcement will be made March 22, at 3 p.m. EST.



Release No. 0229.94
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USDA ANNOUNCES PREVAILING WORLD MARKET PRICE AND USER MARKETING CERTIFICATE PAYMENT RATE FOR UPLAND COTTON

WASHINGTON, March 17--Grant Buntrock, executive vice president of USDA's Commodity Credit Corporation, today announced the prevailing world market price, adjusted to U.S. quality and location (adjusted world price or AWP), for Strict Low Middling (SLM) 1-1/16 inch (leaf grade 4, micronaire 3.5-3.6 and 4.3-4.9, strength 24-25 grams per tex) upland cotton (base quality), and the coarse count adjustment (CCA) in effect from 5:00 p.m. today through 3:59 p.m. Thursday, March 24. The user marketing certificate payment rate announced today is in effect from 12:01 a.m. Friday, March 18 through midnight Thursday, March 24.

The Agricultural Act of 1949, as amended, provides that the AWP may be further adjusted if: (a) the AWP is less than 115 percent of the current crop year loan rate for base quality upland cotton, and (b) the Friday through Thursday average price quotation for the lowest-priced U.S. growth as quoted for Middling (M) 1-3/32 inch cotton, C.I.F. northern Europe (USNE price) exceeds the Northern Europe (NE) price. Because this week's calculated AWP is equal to 129.3 percent of the 1993 upland cotton base quality loan rate, a further adjustment cannot be made.

This week's AWP and coarse count adjustment are determined as follows:

Adjusted World Price

NE Price	81.43
Adjustments:	
Avg. U.S. spot market location	11.91
SLM 1-1/16 inch cotton	1.50
Avg. U.S. location	0.31
Sum of Adjustments	- 13.72
ADJUSTED WORLD PRICE	67.71 cents/lb.

Coarse Count Adjustment

NE Price	81.43
NE Coarse Count Price	- 78.57
	2.86
Adjustment to SLM 1-1/32 inch cotton	- 3.20
	- 0.34
COARSE COUNT ADJUSTMENT	0 cents/lb.

Because the AWP is above 52.35 cents per pound--the base quality loan rate for both the 1992 and 1993 marketing years--the loan repayment rate during this period is equal to the loan rate, adjusted for the specific quality and location plus applicable interest and storage charges. The AWP will continue to be used to determine the value of upland cotton that is obtained in exchange for commodity certificates.

Because the AWP is above the 1993-crop loan rate, loan deficiency payments are not available during this period.

The USNE price has exceeded the NE price by more than 1.25 cents per pound for four consecutive weeks; however, not all of the previous four AWP's (including the AWP announced today) have been less than 130 percent of the 1993 crop year base quality loan rate. As a result, the user marketing certificate payment rate is zero. Relevant data are summarized below:

Week	For the Friday through Thursday Period Ending	AWP (Announced) As Percent of Loan Rate	USNE Price	NE Price cents/lb	User Marketing Certificate Payment Rate
1	Feb. 24, 1994	129.5	83.35	81.52	0.58
2	Mar. 3, 1994	131.2	84.75	82.42	0
3	Mar. 10, 1994	130.1	83.45	81.84	0
4	Mar. 17, 1994	129.3	83.00	81.43	0

Next week's AWP, CCA and user marketing certificate payment rate will be announced on Thursday, March 24, at 5 p.m.



Features-

Release No. 0215.94
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A New Agricultural Product

REPLACING PETROLEUM WITH RENEWABLE CROP OIL

WASHINGTON, March 14 -- Watch for them soon in your marine engine and transmission oils -- new high-performance lubricants routinely made from renewable crop oils rather than from imported petroleum.

Once this renewable alternative turns into commercial reality for the ordinary motorist, the results should include not only smoother running engines but environmental benefits ranging from cleaner air and water to more sustainable farming practices.

American industry is already making the switch from dependence on non-renewable imported petroleum to renewable U.S. crop oils to make everything from lubricants to steel-strength plastics. The process could be accelerated significantly if a project championed by International Lubricants, Inc. of Seattle, Wash., is successful.

"Bio-friendly" crop oils are in use today thanks to environmental regulations creating a small but promising market. These higher-cost oils are required in applications such as hydraulic fluids for use in earth-moving equipment operating around dams and other locations where surface or ground water could be contaminated by petroleum oils. As environmental concerns grow, more rapidly biodegradable crop oils are expected to be required for many other uses.

To help ensure that competitively priced crop-based oils are available to satisfy increasing market demand, the Alternative Agriculture Research and Commercialization (AARC) Center, a branch of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, is investing \$480,000 in an International Lubricants project designed to turn rapeseed oil into a major industrial product. The Center funds projects that will expand industrial and commercial uses of agricultural and forest products.

International Lubricants itself is investing \$230,000 and other partners will invest \$260,000 as part of the AARC-supported rapeseed project. The project's goal is to develop efficient procedures for turning rapeseed oil into a low molecular weight telomer that would have wide applications as the raw material for manufacturing lubricants and new industrial products such as high-strength nylon 1313.

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NOTE TO EDITORS: *An 8 x 10, black and white, glossy print of the photograph is available from Photography Center, OPA, Room 4425-S, USDA, Washington, D.C. 20250; telephone: (202) 720-4022. Request by negative number.*



Release No. 0218.94
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A New Agricultural Product

MULTI-STATE TEAM TO SET "BIODIESEL" STANDARDS

WASHINGTON, March 15 -- With the deadline nearing for compliance with the stringent emissions standards of the 1990 Clean Air Act, "biodiesel" is gaining support as an alternative fuel.

But what is biodiesel? That's the question the not-for-profit American Biofuels Association seeks to answer with a \$140,000 award from the Alternative Agriculture Research and Commercialization (AARC) Center, a branch of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The Center funds projects that will expand industrial and commercial uses of agricultural and forest products.

Biofuels can include a wide variety of fuels and fuel blends containing various percentages of petroleum diesel fuel, soybean-derived oil, or oil obtained from other oilseed crops and animal fats. The Biofuels Association seeks to establish standards and clarify terminology.

In the research project made possible by the AARC investment, a standard diesel engine will be tested with various concentrations of soy-based biofuels. Levels of emissions for unburned hydrocarbons, carbon monoxide, particulate matter, and oxides of nitrogen will be determined. In addition, engine durability testing will be carried out to determine if new engine lubricants need to be developed for use with biodiesel.

Along with the American Biofuels Association, partners for this project include the National SoyDiesel Development Board, a trade organization committed to the development of biodiesel fuels based on soybeans, and the Southwest Research Institute, a private EPA-approved research facility in

Texas that will conduct the actual emissions tests with soydiesel in a Detroit Diesel 6V92 engine that is standard for city bus fleets.

Developing new fuels that make it possible for today's standard diesel engines to meet Clean Air Act emissions requirements is considered the quickest and most cost-effective way to generate environmental gains. This approach promises to reduce air pollution in the nation's major cities without the major investment that would be needed to redesign buses and trucks. As a bonus, the switch from petroleum-based diesel to increasing use of renewable biodiesel fuels will reduce the nation's bill for importing non-renewable petroleum.



Release No. 0223.94
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A New Agricultural Product

MILKWEED COULD SPIN PROFITS FOR NEBRASKA FARMERS

WASHINGTON, March 16 -- Herb Knudsen, President of Natural Fibers Corporation, isn't the first person to try to turn the troublesome milkweed into a commercial crop.

Interest in milkweed floss as an alternative to cotton dates back to at least 1635; 200 years later the French produced silk-like fabrics from wild milkweed fibers; and in World War II, U.S. sailors went to sea with milkweed-filled life jackets.

Today, Nebraska farmers are growing milkweed on 160 acres to provide enough floss for Knudsen's company to fill "Ogallala Down" pillows and comforters with the super-soft and fluffy white non-allergenic material.

Growing milkweed presents more problems, however, than just the complaints of neighboring farmers that the weed might spread. Milkweed's biggest problem is that it is easy prey for pests and diseases. So yields remain too low and uncertain to justify full-scale commercial production. Commercial production would offer many advantages, such as eliminating annual planting (since milkweed is a perennial) and reducing both fertilizer and irrigation requirements compared to raising corn on the same Nebraska fields where milkweed grows best.

Milkweed's promise has sparked a consortium effort to overcome the hurdles. A group including the University of Nebraska, North Coast Ventures, Milkweed Growers, and various individuals is contributing \$900,000 to supplement the \$4.2 million in National Fibers Corporation assets. The Alternative Agriculture Research and Commercialization (AARC) Center, a branch of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, is investing \$150,000 to support the group's program of agronomic research designed to raise milkweed yields to commercially viable levels. The Center funds projects that will expand industrial and commercial uses of agricultural and forest products.

Once yields are high enough to make milkweed an alternative to raising corn, researchers believe the down-comforter market alone could create demand for milkweed production from more than 10,000 acres within the next ten years.

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NOTE TO EDITORS: *Black and white, 8 x 10 glossy prints of the photographs are available from Photography Center, OPA, Room 4425-S, USDA, Washington, D.C. 20250; telephone: (202) 720-4022. Request by negative number.*

